My digital identity

1. Introduction

Do you use social networks to connect with others, to share posts, photos, or videos?

Have you considered how your posts project a particular image of yourself when you communicate online?

This activity introduces you to some of the factors which contribute to your online reputation, and how to present yourself effectively.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this activity, you should be aware of your audience in order to present yourself effectively to them.

2. Who's reading my posts?

Think about your social media accounts. You may have many online contacts from different walks of life, or you might have a select group of contacts.

Some of your contacts you may have met in person, and others you may know through your online networking.

So, who might be reading your posts? Take a look at this example contact list:

- an aunt in Australia;
- school and college friends;
- workmates;
- people who share your political views.

The following examples shows different posts from a social networking account. Think about whether you would be happy to share these posts with those on the example contact list.
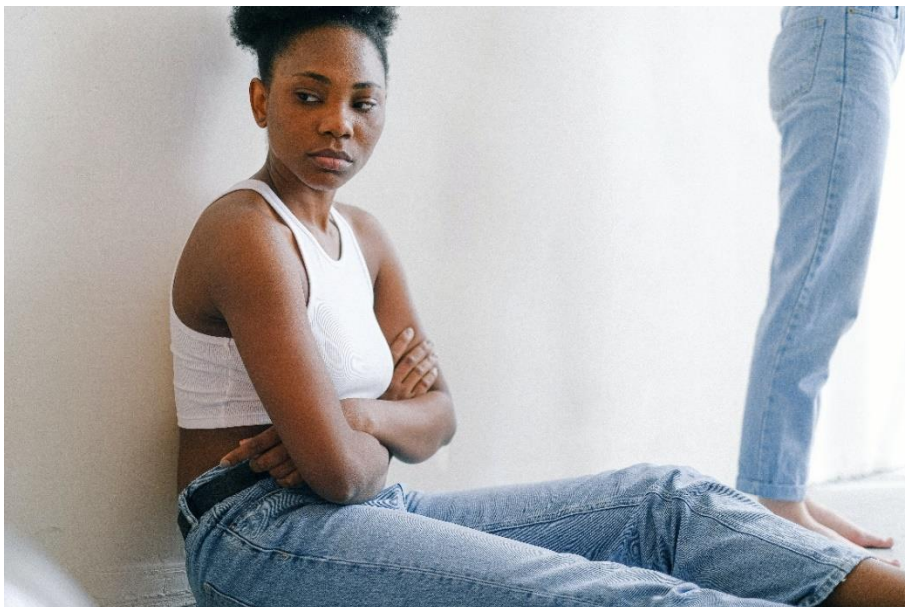
Holiday

"Having a great time with family on holiday. Not missing work!"

(Image by sarahbernier3140 from Pixabay).

Politics

"Eurgh, I am so fed up and angered by the election results."

(Image by Anna Shvets from Pexels).

Last night

"Just getting psyched up for the day ahead, after last night!"

(Image by Andrea Piacquadio from Pexels).

Career goals

"I'm getting ready to apply for a promotion at work #CareerGoals."

(Photo by Annika Palmari on Unsplash).

3. Case study: work colleagues

Think about these four posts. Imagine your work colleagues have read these four posts. How do you think they may feel about your posts?

Note down your thoughts about how your work colleagues might feel about these posts

Here are some of the things that we think:

Your work colleagues may like to hear about what you did on holiday, but inappropriate comments or too much information about your private life could cause you to lose respect in the workplace and damage your prospects. You may also want to be discerning when sharing work-related information in case it is sensitive in any way.

4. What might the impact be on others?

Think about how these posts might impact on the following contacts:

An aunt in Australia

"I enjoy seeing your holiday photos and am interested in your career plans. Your political views and nightly exploits are a little more contentious!"

School and college friends

"We find it funny to see your social life, it reminds us of fun times together! We haven't seen each other for some time, so seeing your work and holiday updates helps us know how you're getting on. We have some difference in opinion about politics, so such an emotive response doesn't sit so well."

People who share your political views

"We totally share your disappointment in the election results. That's the most important post on your account."

5. Making a good impression

Now we've seen the impact posts can have on audiences, what can you do to project an image of yourself that you'd like your social networks to see?

- Understand your target audience: who are they? What are their values and interests?
- Post content that is timely, relevant, using careful wording
- Use language your network will understand, and try not to be to emotive in your expressions
- Be careful posting personal and emotive information
- Be aware who else may be watching! Remember that your network may share your posts, reaching wider audiences than originally intended

6. Summary

Summary

We have seen how the information you post might impact on members of your networks, and how this might be shared across wider audiences. Remember that others can also tag or mention you in their posts, which can contribute to the impression that others have of you, including employers.

Next Steps

Consider how your posts and your network might affect the way in which others perceive you, by taking a look at the following news cases:

Yahoo! News: [Daily Digit: Looking for a job? Be careful about what you post on social media](#)

BBC News: [Hartley Sawyer: The Flash actor fired over offensive tweets](#)